



# Positive Handling Policy

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The policy will be reviewed bi-annually as a minimum, unless lessons learnt or new legislation, national or local guidance suggests the need for an earlier date of review.

## Policy review dates and changes

Review date	By whom	Summary of changes made	Date ratified by governors	Date implemented
2025				

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## **1. Aims, Principles and Values**

### **Aims:**

All Holly House pupils have EHCP's with their Primary Need identified as Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties. Our children can display behaviours that challenge which necessitate the use of physical intervention and restrictive physical intervention (RPI) to prevent injury to themselves, staff and pupils, damage to property, or the breakdown of a safe and enjoyable learning environment. The aim of positive handling is not punishment or control but to promote a positive and proactive approach to behaviour, including de-escalation techniques appropriate to the child or young person, to minimise the likelihood of or avoid the need to use restraint. This policy must be used in conjunction with the school's [Behaviour for Learning Policy](#).

### **Principles:**

- The use of force should, wherever possible, be avoided.
- It must be in the best interests of the pupil
- There are occasions when the use of force is appropriate
- It should be reasonable and proportional using the minimum force for the shortest period
- When force is necessary, it must be used in ways that maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned.

Holly House seeks to eliminating unnecessary and inappropriate use of restraint and minimising the need for its use through a good understanding of the children and young people in our care. We have a strong commitment to meet our pupils needs with a systematic, positive and proactive approach to behaviour with:

- policies, strategies and practices which promote a positive culture and improve the quality of children and young people's lives;
- arrangements which identify, assess and manage risk well;
- high quality training for staff;
- involvement of children and young people, parents and carers, and advocates as appropriate;
- arrangements for carefully assessing the needs of children and young people and the underlying causes of their behaviour, including through developing SmartPlans
- clear arrangements for governance and accountability in respect of behaviour and responses to behaviour that challenges.

The implementation of the principles of this policy must be considered in conjunction with each pupil's SmartPlan which outlines the preferred methods to deescalate each situation to:

- Avoid the need for a physical intervention
- Ensure the least restrictive option is always used
- Maintain the dignity of all concerned

The policy has been written to support all staff who come into contact with pupils and for volunteers working within the school to explain the school's arrangements for positive handling. The policy is available to parents on request and is on the school website.

### **Values:**

Holly House School core values underpin the ethos of the Positive Handling Policy such that

- We uphold the rights of children and young people, autistic spectrum conditions, mental health difficulties whose behaviour challenges. They have the same human rights as all children
- the best interests of children and young people and their safety and welfare underpins any use of restraint
- the risk of harm to children, young people and staff is minimised

## **2. Legislation, statutory requirements and statutory guidance**

The use of all forms of physical intervention and physical contact are governed by the criminal and civil law. The unwarranted or inappropriate use of force may constitute an assault. In addition, it may infringe the human rights of a child or young person.

As included in the DFE 2010 guidance on 'The use of force to control or restrain pupils' seclusion should only be considered in exceptional circumstances and it is an offence to lock a person in a room without a court order. Therefore, at no time should the door be locked as to do so is unlawful and can amount to the false imprisonment of a pupil.

This policy is based on legislation and advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on:

- [Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff 2022](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation at school 2018](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation: advice for schools 2022](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England 2017](#)
- [Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement - 2022](#)
- [Use of reasonable force in schools 2013](#)
- [Reducing the Need for Restraint and Restrictive Intervention 2019](#)
- [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school](#)
- [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Code of Practice](#).

In addition, this policy is based on:

- Section 175 of the [Education Act 2002](#), which outlines a school's duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of its pupils
- Sections 88 to 94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, enables school staff to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:
  - a. committing a criminal offence
  - b. causing personal injury or damage to a property
  - c. prejudicing the maintenance of good order and discipline at the school or among the pupils, whether during a teaching session or otherwise.
  - d. Provides authority to confiscate pupils' property

- [DfE guidance](#) that maintained schools must publish their behaviour policy online

### 3. Definitions

A restrictive physical intervention can be distinguished from a physical intervention by **the use of force**. For example a physical intervention may be guiding an individual who is going with you willingly, but if the individual is resisting and force is used then it becomes a restrictive physical intervention.

### 4. Government Advice Informing This Policy

#### [Use of Reasonable Force: Advice for Head teachers, staff and governing bodies \(July 2013\)](#)

- The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.
- Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.
- 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
- As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.
- Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.
- School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.

#### **Schools can use reasonable force to:**

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so;
- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit;
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others;
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground; and
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts

#### **Schools cannot use force to:**

- punish – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

In addition, Head Teachers (or authorised staff) have the general power to use reasonable force, without consent (given the circumstances) to conduct a pupil search for the following "prohibited items", as detailed in 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation' (DfE – Feb. 2014).

## **5. Team Teach**

Holly House School uses Team Teach as a training model for the management of behaviour. Pupils at Holly House exhibit behaviour that challenge (verbal or non-verbal) as part of their way of communicating. Staff are trained to recognise the signs that a child is in crisis and respond in ways to reduce their anxiety. The Team Teach approach is at least 95% de-escalation and less than 5% physical intervention.

At Holly House we strive to create a safe learning environment where positive behaviours are promoted, anxieties are reduced and risks are minimised. Each pupil has a SmartPlan which identifies the preferred actions that staff can take to enable a young person to deescalate and regulate their behaviour. The Team Teach training with regular updates and refreshers means that staff are highly skilled at supporting pupils through the early stages of a crisis, avoiding reaching the point where a restrictive intervention is necessary.

Positive Behaviour Support is an intrinsic part of our behaviour policy. Holly House School has a positive and proactive approach to behaviour based on support and understanding. The detail of this is in the [Behaviour for Learning Policy](#) and focusses on Respect, Responsibility and Relationships. All behaviour is a form of communication and has a cause and a purpose.

Holly House School is committed to the term “Positive Handling” to describe a broad spectrum of risk reduction strategies. Positive Handling is a holistic approach involving: policy, guidance, management of the environment, deployment of staff, setting factors, personal behaviours, diversion, diffusion and distraction.

### **Off-site Behaviour Concerns**

To keep children safe on activities off-site it may be necessary to use Restrictive Physical Intervention in a public place. It is important therefore that supervising members of staff have some way of identifying themselves i.e. ID cards to members of the public who may be concerned.

## **6. Staff Training**

Holly House School has two qualified Team Teach instructors to facilitate the training at the school. All new staff undergo the 12-hour training module with subsequent 6-hour modules every two years and refreshers as required. Training records for all staff are kept by the Team Teach trainers. All training is timetabled into the training programme each year.

- Holly House staff are trained in Team Teach so that their use of physical restraint /positive handling falls within safe and statutory guidelines.
- We also train staff in legal requirements and general advice on managing behaviour.
- Staff have a duty to inform the Senior Leadership Team of any injuries which affect their ability to handle children.
- Training for all staff will be made available and will be the responsibility of the Senior Member of Staff responsible for Team Teach.
- No member of staff will be expected to undertake the use of reasonable force without appropriate training.
- Holly House School acknowledges that physical techniques are only a part of a whole setting approach to behaviour management.

## **7. Recording**

Where physical control or restraint has been used a record of the incident will be kept on the BehaviourSmart system. If there is a serious incident involving a pupil, not involving physical intervention, it must also be recorded. This record must be made on the behaviour reporting system, BehaviourSmart. It may also be necessary to alert the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or their deputies) and make a report on MyConcern.

- A BehaviourSmart incident log needs to be completed as soon as possible after the incident, prior to staff going off duty.
- Parents will be informed by telephone by the class team or by the Inclusion and Engagement Team Leader.
- Phone calls need to be logged on Class notes / MyConcern
- An Accident Form (completed electronically by the school business officer) will be made and returned to Derbyshire LA in situations where injury has occurred to either staff or pupil. The LA Health and Safety Officer will be informed where hospital or GP attention is required. They are responsible for making a report to RIDDOR when the criteria has been met.
- Staff and children will be given basic first aid treatment for any injuries that require treatment. Where staff and pupils have been involved in an incident involving reasonable force, they should have access to emotional support. This can be provided by key workers / mental health first aiders or a preferred staff member.
- Debriefing must take place as soon as possible after the incident has been dealt with.
- Any injuries must be recorded on the school's accident book record sheet via the school office.

## 8. Post incident actions

The Assistant Headteacher B&A with the Inclusion and Engagement Team Leader will review each incident and inform the Head Teacher / Deputy Headteacher and DSL if further investigation is required. The headteacher will be aware of and have oversight of all incidents where a physical intervention is conducted. Following a physical intervention the pupil's SmartPlan is reviewed and updated as required.

The Inclusion and Engagement Team Leader alongside the school leadership team actively support staff who work with pupils with challenging behaviour. If further action is required in relation to a member of staff or a pupil, this will be pursued through the appropriate procedures:

- Review of SmartPlan
- Team Teach Practice review and further training provided as required
- Safeguarding Policy procedures (this may involve investigations by Police and/or Social Services)
- Staff or Pupil Disciplinary Procedures
- School Behaviour Policy
- Exclusions Procedure in the case of violence or assault against a member of staff or child
- The member of staff will be kept informed of any action taken.
- In the case of any action concerning a member of staff, he/she will be advised to seek advice from his/her professional association/union.

Where restraint is used, it is closely monitored and post-incident support is important for both pupils and staff. It is important that all parties involved in a restrictive intervention have the opportunity to

discuss their feelings, repair their relationships and find ways of reducing any long-term trauma. This is facilitated through the school's Restorative Practice Practitioners

## **9. Monitoring arrangements**

The Behaviour and Attitudes senior leader along with the Inclusion and Engagement Team Leader (Team Teach Trainer) will check the written reports and monitor the content. Where there is a concern or a learning opportunity, they will look at available CCTV footage and share best practice or concerns with the Head/Deputy. Procedural reviews will be undertaken where there are examples of good practice, lessons to be learned or concerns around the use of restraint. These reviews will be written up and the Head/Deputy will take appropriate action which may include sharing with the staff team as part of ongoing training.

## **10. Complains following a physical intervention**

All complaints about the use of force will be investigated by the Head Teacher.

Where a member of staff has acted within the law – that is, they have used reasonable force in order to prevent injury, damage to property or disorder – this will provide a defence to any criminal prosecution or other civil or public law action. All low-level concerns will be reported as described by the Safeguarding Policy. Where there is reason to believe the 'Threshold of Harm' has been met, the Local Authority Safeguarding Officer will be informed

Any complaints about staff will be investigated through the School's Complaints Policy. If necessary, the complaint will be dealt with by the Staff Disciplinary Procedures and/or Safeguarding Policy

## **11. Monitoring this policy**

Holly House School will review this Positive Handling Policy at least once every two years, or as new Government advice is published.

## **12. Links with other policies**

This behaviour policy is linked to the following policies

- [Behaviour for Learning Policy](#)
- [Exclusions policy](#)
- [Safeguarding Child protection policy](#)
- [Complaints procedure](#)